

Conference Abstract

Catalogue of Life Plus: A collaborative project to complete the checklist of the world's species

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Abstract

Although the Catalogue of Life (CoL) continues to expand, its coverage is still far from complete, with several important megadiverse groups mostly lacking. Additionally, some segments of the Catalogue require major work to resolve synonymy or to incorporate recent names. As a result, key infrastructures that seek to organise data on the species of the world or particular regions (including GBIF, EOL, BHL and BOLD, among others) are unable to use CoL as a complete checklist of the world's species. It has become common for such platforms to augment CoL with automatically constructed arrangements of additional names and taxa to ensure that all species can be placed in a common framework. Since these efforts usually depend on algorithmic interpretation of text strings, the results are variable and lead in some cases to undesirable results. There is no easy way for all of these infrastructures to fix these issues in a consistent and interoperable way.

Accordingly, Catalogue of Life Plus (CoL+) was started in 2017 as a collaborative project between the Catalogue of Life, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, Naturalis Biodiversity Center and other partners, with financial support from the Netherlands Biodiversity Information Facility and the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture. CoL+ seeks to replace existing disconnected efforts with a shared, extended

catalogue and to complete coverage of expert-reviewed names without sacrificing quality. The project aims to create an open, shared, and sustainable consensus taxonomy to serve the proper linking of data with in and between biodiversity information initiatives.

The goals for the CoL+ project are to build a new infrastructure for the Catalogue of Life that:

- Extends and enriches the catalogue with more taxonomic sources to create a larger pool of scientific names, where feasible fill taxonomic gaps, and provide other enrichments with linkages to literature and references
- Replaces the current GBIF Backbone Taxonomy
- Separates names and taxonomy with different identifiers and authorities for names and taxa for better reuse
- Provides avenues for (infrastructural) support to the completion and strengthening of taxonomic and nomenclature content authorities

Specifically the project will establish a clearinghouse for taxonomy and nomenclature and rebuild all existing infrastructure of the Catalogue of Life including webservices, the portal and the software for the assembly of the catalogue and its editorial work.

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